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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In order to discharge its functions, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters holds an annual session at United Nations Headquarters. Pursuant to section III of General Assembly resolution 37/99 K of 13 December 1982, the functions of the Advisory Board are as follows:

(a) To advise the Secretary-General on various aspects of studies and research in the area of arms limitation and disarmament carried out under the auspices of the United Nations or institutions within the United Nations system, in particular on the integration of a programme of such studies with a comprehensive programme of disarmament, once this had been established;

(b) To serve as the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR);

(c) To advise the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Disarmament Campaign;

(d) At the specific invitation of the Secretary-General, to provide him with advice on other matters within the area of disarmament and arms limitation.

2. In 1989, the Secretary-General decided to make a number of changes in the functioning of the Board, so as to facilitate a broader interpretation of the Board's existing mandate and to permit him to draw on the accumulated experience and wisdom of the Board for advice on matters within the area of arms limitation and disarmament. The title of the Board was also modified to "Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters".

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* A/48/150 and Corr.1.

3. The Secretary-General reports annually to the General Assembly on the work of the Advisory Board as requested by the Assembly in its resolution 38/183 O of 20 December 1983. A report on the 1993 session of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters follows.

4. The Board held its twenty-fourth session from 28 June to 2 July in New York, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Marcos Castrioto de Azambuja. The chairmanship of the Board rotates annually. The present membership of the Board is shown in the annex.

5. The Board devoted three meetings of its 1993 session to discussing current developments and trends in international affairs and the implications therein for the role of the United Nations in international security and disarmament. In connection with the discussions on this item, the members of the Board considered the report of the Secretary-General entitled "New Dimensions of Arms Regulation and Disarmament in the Post-Cold War Era" (A/C.1/47/7). Introductory remarks by four members of the Board also set the tenor of the discussions. These members were: Professor Muchkund Dubey, Ambassador Peggy Mason, Ambassador Mohamed I. Shaker and Professor John Simpson. In response to the Secretary-General's request to the Board in 1989, the outcome of the Board's discussions on these questions was subsequently reflected in a personal report to him by the Chairman.

6. As regards the Board's exchange of views on issues of relevance to international peace and security, as reflected in the Chairman's report, the Secretary-General notes the view expressed unanimously by its members that, contrary to perceptions in certain quarters, the post-Cold War era was not the post-disarmament era. On the contrary, arms control and disarmament lay at the heart of the new collective/cooperative security building process that had emerged since the Cold War. While during the Cold War, arms control and disarmament had been primary tools for effecting containment and achieving stability, particularly between East and West, there now existed the opportunity to create a new international environment based on genuinely cooperative mechanisms for maintaining peace and security. Furthermore, while disarmament continued to play an important role as an instrument to limit or control armaments through the negotiation of agreements, it had now acquired added significance as a tool - together with preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building - in establishing the conditions for the flourishing of collective security.

7. Four main issues dominated the discussions of the Board on international affairs: the maintenance of peace at the global and regional levels; non-proliferation in all its aspects; conventional armament/disarmament; and multilateral disarmament machinery. In particular, the Secretary-General would like to note the following points raised in the Board's discussions that may deserve further review by the international community:

(a) There is a need to redefine the proper limits for the use of force, especially regarding the disarming of parties to a conflict, be it inter- or intra-State. Due regard should be paid to this question so that it does not impact negatively on the effective implementation of disarmament measures. To this end, the United Nations should endeavour to promote arms control and disarmament as cooperative efforts that seek to foster collective security based

on agreed rules of inter-State behaviour, including rules on the use of force, from the subregional to the regional to the global levels. In this connection, the promotion of defensive postures for armed forces would be useful.

(b) To permit the United Nations and regional organizations to discharge their responsibilities more effectively, they might find it useful to have access to satellite-generated data for the monitoring of sensitive areas, crisis management and the implementation of confidence-building measures.

(c) Whereas the Non-Proliferation Treaty should be extended indefinitely, appropriate consideration should be given to such concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States as the need for an early conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and the strengthening of negative security assurances.

(d) Non-proliferation should be addressed not only in its horizontal, but also in its vertical aspect, as the question of nuclear proliferation is increasingly related to the issue of nuclear disarmament.

(e) The main challenge for the United Nations in the area of non-proliferation is to enhance non-proliferation efforts, while at the same time trying to bridge the gap between supplier and recipient States of dual-purpose technology. The Organization could work to build consensus on the development of more universally accepted approaches for the transfer of technology. The development of codes of conduct, agreed guidelines and consultation procedures are possible paths to be followed by the United Nations in this area.

(f) The United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament have a potential role to play in promoting transparency, openness and confidence-building at the regional level as a first step in a broader regional security dialogue.

(g) The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms could make an even greater contribution to the strengthening of security if eventually it led to actual weapons reductions. In this connection, the Conference on Disarmament could also contribute to the process of arms reductions by developing general guidelines on the reduction or control of conventional arms within the regional context.

8. The Secretary-General further notes and welcomes the commitment made by members of the Board to continue their interchanges among themselves and through the Chairman during the time between the Board's annual sessions with a view to assisting the Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) and UNIDIR in carrying out their respective programmes of work, as well as forwarding to the Secretary-General views and suggestions on relevant issues, as desirable and appropriate.

9. The Director of ODA and other staff of the Office briefed the Board on the status of various United Nations activities in the field of disarmament of relevance to the work of the Board. In the area of studies, the Board was informed of the conclusion of the work of the Panel of Governmental Technical Experts on the Register of Conventional Arms established by the Secretary-General, whose responsibilities included the elaboration of technical procedures

for the effective operation of the Register and modalities for early expansion of its scope.

10. Furthermore, the Board learned of the activities that have been undertaken by ODA for the effective implementation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Members welcomed the four regional workshops organized by the Office with a view to assisting Member States in developing a better understanding of the technical procedures involved in preparing a reply for the Register. Some members expressed the view that an effort should be made to hold workshops in regions not yet covered to assist Member States in those areas.

11. Members of the Board were pleased to learn of the number of replies to the Register received by June 1993 and expressed the hope that more States would participate in the Register in the future. Nevertheless, some members expressed concern that, unless an increasing number of States in particularly sensitive regions or subregions chose to report to the Register, early gains might be lost if reporting States stopped providing relevant data for lack of reciprocity in their particular regions.

12. Ambassador François de La Gorce, member of the Board and also of the group of experts on defensive security concepts and policies, briefed the Board on the highlights, conclusions and recommendations of the study on this subject. A status report was also given on the work of the group of governmental experts charged with the study on specific aspects related to the application of different confidence-building measures in outer space, which is due for submission by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

13. The Board heard with interest a presentation of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme (formerly the World Disarmament Campaign) and the activities that had been undertaken within its framework since the Board's previous session. In this connection, it was recalled that at its previous session, the Board had indeed made a recommendation to change the name of the Campaign so as to reflect more accurately the realities of the times. The Board was informed that in carrying out the activities of the Disarmament Information Programme, ODA had continued the trend started in 1992 to promote such priorities as non-proliferation in all its aspects, regional approaches, openness and transparency and other confidence-building measures.

14. The Board was also briefed on the activities of the three Regional Centres, in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Strong concern was expressed regarding the difficult financial situation in which the Regional Centres found themselves. In view of the meaningful role which the Centres had and could continue to play, some members stated that a proposal to cover the administrative costs of the Centres from the regular budget of the United Nations should be supported. In this connection, some members voiced apprehension about the uncertainty regarding the post of Director of the Regional Centre in Asia. Some again raised the issue of accessibility and convenience of the location of the Centres vis-à-vis the role they were expected to play within their respective regions.

15. In its capacity as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, the Advisory Board considered and approved the report of the Director of UNIDIR on the Institute's activities in 1992-1993 and the proposed research programme and annual budget for 1994. In addition, the Board was also briefed by the Director of UNIDIR on the elements of UNIDIR's programme for 1995. An account of the Board's deliberations is contained in document A/48/270, Annex II, including the Board's recommendation of a subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations amounting to $220,000 for 1994. The Board expressed the view that the annual subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations would continue to be needed in the future in order to assure the independence and the financial viability of the Institute.

ANNEX

Members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Mr. Ednan T. Agaev
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Former Director-General of the Nigerian
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Mitsuro Donowaki
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Mexico City, Mexico

Prof. Muchkund Dubey
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Lt. General Emmanuel A. Erskine (Ret.)
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Dr. Curt Gasteyger
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Director, Programme for Strategic and International
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Mr. Henny J. van der Graaf
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Dr. Josef Holik
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Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament
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Mr. François de La Gorce
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Mr. James F. Leonard
Ambassador
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Ms. Peggy Mason
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Mr. Sverre Lodgaard, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, is an ex officio member of the Advisory Board when acting in its capacity as the Board of Trustees of the Institute

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